

From: redsheep@i-2000.com@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR,Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/7/01 2:55am
Subject: Settlement?

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Your Honor

I am a personal computer user for 11 years now. I have worked as a programmer, systems manger and instructor. I have watched an industry go from wide open .i.e. one in which any good idea would sell _well_, into one in which it is impossible to sell ANYTHING.

The internet was a great place to explore in the days of Mosaic and Spry-in-a-box. Now with only Internet Explorer as a real contender, I dread firing up the old browser. There are sites that have special non-IE pages. E-mail was fine, then Outlook became the de facto standard and I spent two days trying to disinfect _1_ Windows based, Intel compatible PC from an e-mail worm. Never happened to me using Eudora. BUT THE BOSS SAYS USE OUTLOOK.

Old joke: If Microsoft made refrigerators, they would claim they make ice, keep food fresher, & chill drinks to just the right temperature. If Apple made refrigerators, they would say theirs does everything Microsoft refrigerators do, but 5 years earlier.

Microsoft is notorious for taking others ideas and tweaking them to its own end then claiming it was their idea. Sort of like the Communist regime in the Soviet Union...

The lay press has noted that everyone is afraid to mention what they are developing for fear that if Microsoft gets wind of it, Microsoft will buy more people to work it out faster, and take all the credit. How often has Microsoft waited for Apple to start a new round of firings only to hire leading edge programmers and rework the technology to their own designs?

Microsoft can afford to buy any other software house or competitor. here are two reasons they do not. 1) Keeping the 'competition' around makes it look as though they are not a monopoly. 2) And this was confirmed to me by someone well connected, In order for Bill Gates to know what his next great idea is going to be.

But our question is Are they a monopoly. In that they control over 85 per cent of the GUI systems sold, they most certainly are. In that they have bought out more products just to kill them - non-Microsoft BASIC and dBase come to mind - yes they are. In that they have back doors into their programs which only their programmers can exploit,

remember Caldera vs Microsoft?, they definitely are.

Is this a true settlement? No. A fair one would break Microsoft Corporation up into three competitive units, Software Systems (Windows et al), software (Office and Visio et al), services (MSN, MSNBC et al), and certification (digital signatures for software "designed for Windows."

The CEO where I work has noted that No One can make money in a market where the competition is giving it away for free. Maybe that is the true test of whether or not Microsoft is a monopoly. Did not Rockefeller and Standard Oil cut prices to almost free gasoline to shut down competition and ensure their "Market Share Growth"?

Humbly,

Dan Pollack